NUMB. L.

The Prompter.

To be Continued TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS.

What Things *are Theſe, who wou'd be* JUDGES *thought,*
By NATURE *not* inſpir'd, *or* LEARNING taught!
Eſſay on Poetry.

FRIDAY, MAY 2. 1735.

ONE obvious and eaſy *Amendment* to the *Statute* of *Elizabeth*, againſt common *Strollers* and *Players* of *Interludes*, wou'd effectually have anſwer'd the End of all thoſe various Applications, which have given ſo much Trouble of late, to a certain Powerful and Auguſt Aſſembly.

A *Vagrant*, in the plaineſt and moſt rational Senſe of the Word, is a WANDERER.—Not only He who *ſtrolls* from his Place of *Habitation*, but *He* alſo, who *wanders* out of the *Sphere* of his *Underſtanding*, is a STROLLER, in the cleareſt Signification of the Phraſe.—How Happy therefore wou'd it have been for the *Stage*, had there been added to that *Act*, a Clauſe, declaring all ſuch MANAGERS to be *Vagrants*, and liable to the *merited* Correction, who, without the Pretenſions of *Genius* or *Judgment*, ſhou'd preſume to *ſtroll* into *Dramatical Regions*, and impudently aſſume the *Direction*, of a Province, wherein they have never been *naturaliz'd*.

IT is only from Want of ſo wholeſome and *corrective* a Clauſe, that *Theatre*, and *Bear-garden*, are become Terms, of almoſt the ſame Signification. — A Loud, irregular, Variety, of coarſe, and noiſy Entertainments, without *Purpoſe*, or *Connection*, is, alike, the Buſineſs of *Either*.—Oppreſſion, Inſolence, Partiality, and Ignorance, on the Part of the *Manager*, produce, in Return, on the *Actor's* Side, Scorn, Indolence, Neglect, Diſcontent, and Defiance. —— Hence, All Thoſe arrogant Refuſals, and Elections, of what Parts they WILL NOT, or what they WILL, appear in.—The Manager, by his Ignorance made incapable to find, *inſtruct*, or *form*, new Actors, is of Courſe, and by *Neceſſity*, dependant on the Old Ones: And the dreadful CHAOS of *Milton*, with the half-foundered *Devil* in the midſt of it, is the ſtrongeſt Image in the World, of a Modern *Play-houſe*, and its *Management*.

IF the Paragraph in a late Daily Paper was well grounded, which gave the Publick an Account for what *ſurprizing Reaſon* the Laſt new Comedy could not be acted on the Second Night, *That* Proof will ſtand, in Place of a *Thouſand*, to vindicate the Juſtice of whatever can be ſaid, in *Scorn* of ſuch *looſe Government*. — And, to ſhew what *Moral*, and *Inſtructive*, Hints, are likely to be expected from the *Stage* under its preſent Adminiſtration, I ſhall give my Readers a gradual Courſe of *Prologues*, *Epilogues*, and Parts of Entertainments, which the Actors have *refus'd* to *ſpeak*, out of a pitiful, and ſcandalous *Fear*, to DISOBLIGE, and OFFEND, the *Town*: and which have been ſent me by *their Authors*, for Illuſtration of a Remark, I ſome time ſince made, upon That Subject, in one of my *Prompters*.

I begin with the following Epilogue — The *Rejectors* of *which*, muſt have been *delicate* Judges of what is likely to *Pleaſe*, or to *Offend*! A Stage, indeed, under ſuch skilful, and judicious Direction, MAY MERIT, for aught I know, the ſtrongeſt *Act* of RESTRAINT, by the Legiſlature.

I have Room, in my Paper, for only One at a Time: But ſhall give the Reſt, by Degrees, with ſuch *Animadverſions* annex'd, as may ſet in its true Light the Diſpute between *Players* and *Patent-mongers*.

Note — The making WISDOM, in the following *Epilogue*, aſcend from *Beneath* the Stage, and LOVE deſcend from *Above* it, ſeems to have been a Satirical Inſinuation, that neither the One, nor the Other, find a natural Admiſſion to *our Theatres*.

An Entertainment, *by way of* Epilogue,

In the Characters of

WISDOM, *and* LOVE.

PALLAS *aſcending, with Helmet, and Spear, to an Overture of* WARLIKE MUSICK.

Pall. PALLAS, the *Guardian* of the ſlighted *Stage*,
Brings a *Complaint*, that *fires* Her, into *Rage*:
Stung to the *Soul*, ſhe cannot, will not, *bear* it,
But, for the *Sex's* Honour, muſt declare it.
Of *Fifty* Powder'd *Beaux*, here *wedg'd*, behind,
Not *One faſt Friend* can fading *Woman* find!
They *rail*—They *joke*—Nor their Diſtaſte *conceal*,
Unconſcious of your *Power*, from *Head*, to *Heel*! —
Whence *ſprung* this *Change* I know not — But, I'll *ſwear*,
Neglect's a Pain, no *Woman's* Heart can *bear*.
Cupid!

Cupid! Thou airy, God of empty *Dreams!*
How *fall'n* Thy Empire! and how *False* Thy Schemes!
Why weighs the *Sex* too *light*, in Love's own Scale?
And why, thus *faintly*, does *Thy* Power prevail?

CUPID deſcends, *with his Bow, and his Quiver, to a Change, of Soft Muſick.*

Cup. —Goddeſs! I *heard* Thee—Thy reproachful *Pride*
I, *thus*, *defy* — and *ſhade* Thy *tow'ry* Side! —
I, too, dare *ſtrut!* —
Pall. —*Proud Toy!* — His *Wings* He ſpreads: [*They croſs diſdainfully.*
But his blunt *Arrows*, All, have *loſt* their *Heads!*
Go, helpleſs, taſteleſs, thoughtleſs, powerleſs, *Chit:*
Thou *Ghoſt* of Paſſion! and Thou *Jeſt* of Wit!
Where are Thy *Boaſts* of touching *Man* with *Pain?*
And *what* is WOMAN, *now?*
Cup. — *Vain* — ſweetly *Vain!* —
Pall. —'Tis *Thence* Love *languiſhes* —
Cup. — *Unjuſt* Complaint!
Love *languiſhes*, becauſe DESIRE grows *faint*.
And, *That*, — proud Scorner! I muſt charge on *Thee:*
Thine are their *Minds* — Their *Beauties* buſy *Me*.
Of late, even *there*, my Power has been unknown:
All their *new Modes* of *Charming* are *Their* OWN.
I, taught the Sex their Art of *Wounding ſure*;
But They Themſelves have taught the Arts of CURE.
Each amorous Scene, that fills this Active Space,
Sees a Light LAUGH *diſarm* ſome Angel Face:
No *ſerious* Sounds can their gay Hearts engage;
Sweet *ſep'rate* Actors! They *deſpiſe* the *Stage!*
Attention is beneath a *Beauty*'s Care,
Her Whirlwind Spirit ſcatters *Senſe* in *Air!*
ABSENT, in *Preſence*, They, unliſt'ning, ſit;
Too *gay*, for Meaning! and too *fine*, for Wit!
Or, when They *grieve*, They bring their *own Chagrin:*
Nor feel the *foreign* Sorrows of the *Scene*.
Impatient, *five*, *long*, *Acts*, they *loll*, *reclin'd:*
And ſigh, for *Plays*, of a more *Winning* Kind.
All of *One Mind*, of late, *Agreed*, They fall,
Victims, to *One Gallant*.
Pall. — But *One*, for ALL?
Sure! *He* muſt be ſome Rarity!
Cup. — *No Doubt.* —
I'll draw His *Picture*; and you'll *point* him *out*. —
A painted, thin, ſmooth, pale-fac'd, tott'ring *Beau!*
Deaf, dumb, blind, lame; —Too weak to *ſtand*, or *go!*
From Hand to Hand, kind Hearts! they ſtoop to *ſhift* him:
For He can't *ſtir* a *Limb*, but, as *They lift* him!
Yet, more than *Love*, or *Wit*, Their Hearts He moves:
And *changes*, oft'ner than *They change their Loves!*
Pall. — And, do They *like* This Monſter?
Cup. — Aye: — and *will*. —
Pall. — What! *All?*
Cup. — *All. All.*
Pall. — What is His *Name?*
Cup. — QUADRILLE.
Pall. — It has been *ſaid*, that *Love*, and *Folly* fit:
But *you're* a JOKER, *Cupid!* and a WIT! —
Let us, Each, ſingly, our *Perſuaſion try:*
Take you *One Half* the Houſe — The *other* I.
Cup. — Alas! 'twill never do: 'Tis *fruitleſs Zeal.*
Paſſions to move That Sex, muſt make them *feel:*
All *You* can SAY, They'll *laugh at.* —
Pall. — Boy, be *ſtill.*
Yours, let The *Ladies*, hear, The *Men* MY *Will.*
[*Advances to the Front of the Stage.*

If, *Gentlemen!* you *diſregard* the PLAYER,
Or hear him, coldly, and *with-hold* your *Care:*
For *your own ſakes*, ſupport his pow'rful ART;
That lets in *Love*, and *Pity*, to the *Heart*.
HERE, *firſt*, Imprinted *Sighs* an Entrance find;
And the Soul, *Opening*, leaves *Diſguiſe* behind.
Taught, by the *Scene*, with gen'rous Warmth to *Glow*,
To feel *Another's Joy*, and *ſhare* his *Woe*;
Your *Fair* adopts Each *Suff'ring Lover's* View:
And, by the Worth of *Heroes*, meaſures YOU.
But, if, regardleſs of *Your* Cauſe, and *Ours*,
You join the *Enemy*'s triumphant Powers,
Sly *Matadores* will Each Man's Hope *betray:*
And *melt* his *Miſtreſs down*, the quite *wrong* Way.
——Now, *Cupid*, to the LADIES. [*Stepping back.*
Cup. — E're I go,
I'm ſure *my* Labour's *loſt*.
Pall. — Deſpair not *ſo*. [Cupid *comes forward.*
Cup. — Ladies! — Your *Rivals*, in gay Climes, complain,
That *Winds*, and *Froſts*, aſſail your Charms, *in Vain.*
'Twere *glorious Envy!* cou'd They, *alſo*, *ſay*,
That, while *Their* Taſte quits Love, and Wit, for PLAY,
You, noblier-minded, and of *Senſe*, more *true*,
Scorn to be *Lovelieſt*, and not *Wiſeſt*, *too*.
That, *form'd*, like Them, to be the THEMES of *Wit*,
You *not*, like Them, *forſake* — but *cheriſh* It.
Think of your *Glory*, Ladies! —
[Pallas *comes forward.*
Pall. Gentlemen!
Think of your *Int'reſt* — and forſake the *Scene*,
At your *own Peril!* — Wives, who, from *Quadrille*,
Return, with *ruffled* Face, and *fighting Will!*
Wou'd, at the *Scene's* ſoft Fire, *new-point* their Charms;
And bring *redoubled Tranſport* to your Arms.
Cup. — Enough, —The *Prudent* urge no Wiſh *too high.* [*Makes Signs of Caution, and pulls* Pallas *by the Sleeve.*
Pall. — Ev'n LOVE can *counſel well*, when *Wiſdom's by!*
Cup. — *You*, Goddeſs, boaſt your Pow'r, in *Man's* ſtrong Breaſt:
But I know *Woman's* weaker Boſoms, beſt.
Still — what They *will*, They WILL. —
Pall. — Then, be it *Ours*,
Perſuaſion failing, to exert NEW *Powers*.
Let Both, henceforth, our different Influence *join:*
And ſee reluctant Beauty FORC'D to ſhine.
Cup. — Great *Pallas!* I *embrace* thee: — Be it ſo. — [*Embracing.*
Goddeſs of Arts, and Arms! — *Receive* my *Bow*. —
[*Giving the Bow.*
Take, and *new-point*, Love's Every *blunted Dart:* —
[*Giving the Arrows.*
And, *tip't* with *Reaſon*, wound, and *heal*, the Heart.
Pall. — *Cupid!* — Aſſociate God, of *Smiles*, and *Joy!*
Take, in Exchange, *This Spear:* no *feath'ry Toy!* —
[*Giving her Spear.*
And, *now*, where-e'er Thou ſeeſt a Fair one's Breaſt
Flutter, too *lightly*, —*Touch* and give it *Reſt*.
But, where ſome ſolid Virtue ſighs, *in vain*,
Wound, with MY *Lance:* and *dignify* the *Pain*.
Cup. — *Now*, Woman's Empire's FIX'D! —
Pall. — Confirm it, *Jove!*
Cup. Love *ſoftens* Wiſdom:
Pall. — Wiſdom *ſtrengthens* Love.
[Exeunt, *at oppoſite Openings.*

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